



# NEWS RELEASE

## EUROPE REGIONAL MEDICAL COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

CMR. 442 APO AE 09042  
U.S. ARMY HOSPITAL – NACHRICHTEN KASERNE  
POSTFACH 103180 69021 HEIDELBERG, GERMANY  
DSN 371-3317/3049 TEL. 06221-7-3317/3049  
PHIL TEGTMEIER CELL – 0162-270-1578

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### *Measles Outbreak in German Community*

**HEIDELBERG**, Germany – German health officials in the Nordrhein-Westfalen area are urging parents who have not already done so to have their children immunized against the measles in the wake of a recent spike in the numbers of school-age children contracting the disease in that region.

“Although more than 1,000 cases of measles have been reported in the affected area, no cases have been reported in the U.S. beneficiary population, said Dr. (Lt. Col.) William Corr, preventive medicine consultant, Europe Regional Medical Command. “This is likely due to the fact that there are no large concentrations of U.S. beneficiaries in the Nordrhein-Westfalen area and the extensive number of beneficiaries who have been vaccinated against measles.”

Childhood immunizations are not administered as universally within the German population as they are in the United States and DoDDS schools, Corr pointed out.

According to a report on [Eurosurveillance.org](http://Eurosurveillance.org), a not-for-profit web site for sharing medical information among European countries, only 25 of the patients seen had been immunized (less than 2.5 percent).

“Measles is a highly contagious disease, but is prevented through vaccination and other countermeasures,” said Corr, who is on staff at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center. “All military health care beneficiaries should take this as a reminder to keep their shots up to date.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control web site, measles symptoms begin to appear about 10 to 12 days after exposure to the virus. The infected person first experiences a fever lasting about two to four days that can peak as high as 103 degrees F to 105 degrees F. This is followed by the onset of cough, runny nose, and/or conjunctivitis (pink eye). The rash usually appears about 14 days after exposure and lasts five to six days. It begins at the hairline, and then involves the face and upper neck.

Over the next three days, the rash gradually proceeds downward and outward, reaching the hands and feet.

The Nordrhein-Westfalen state is just north of the Rheinland-Pfalz, the German state that is host to major American military communities. Those include Wiesbaden and the Kaiserslautern American Military Community, the largest concentration of American military members outside the U.S.